

Talmud Torah London

202 Upper Clapton Road, London E5 9DH

Inspection dates

27–29 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and proprietors have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The Chol (secular) curriculum is too narrow. In some subjects the teaching is fragmentary and there are no checks on pupils' progress. There is minimal provision for personal, social, health and economic education.
- Teachers do not use assessment effectively to set work that challenges the most able pupils. Consequently, the most able pupils do not reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders, including the proprietors, do not consistently evaluate the school's effectiveness and make clear-cut plans for addressing the school's weaknesses.
- Limitations in provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development mean that pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about the diversity of the United Kingdom. Little regard is paid to promoting awareness of and instilling respect for people with protected characteristics.
- Sometimes, teachers' questioning is superficial and does not help pupils to think deeply enough about their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders make sure pupils are safe. Pastoral care is good. Leaders work well with external agencies to support pupils' welfare.
- Pupils are well behaved, welcoming and curious. Relationships in the school are good.
- Most pupils make good progress in their Kodesh lessons because they enjoy learning about and discussing their traditional texts, laws and customs.
- Teaching usually secures good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who fall behind in their learning catch up with their classmates quickly. This is because leaders identify their needs and arrange appropriate support. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also well supported and make good progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, so that the curriculum makes provision for teaching pupils about the diversity of the United Kingdom and actively promotes respect for people who have any of the protected characteristics
 - leaders draw up a robust school improvement plan, analyse the impact and effectiveness of their actions.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils consistently make good progress in all subjects by:
 - planning good quality teaching and learning programmes and assessment arrangements for the range of subjects taught.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that the most able pupils reach the high standards of which they are capable by ensuring that teachers:
 - ask probing questions to help pupils think more deeply
 - use information about pupils' progress to plan appropriately challenging activities.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that the school's curriculum for technological, physical, aesthetic and creative education is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work which are implemented effectively, and take into account the age, aptitudes and needs of all pupils (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)(a)).
 - Ensure that the school's provision for personal, social, health and economic education reflects the school's aim and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 (paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i) and 2(2)(d)(ii)).
 - Ensure that pupils are effectively prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society (paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(i)).
 - Ensure that teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subject taught (paragraphs 3, 3(a)).
 - Ensure that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and information is used from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraphs 3, 3(g)).
 - Ensure that the proprietor actively promotes and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (paragraphs 5, 5(a), 5(b)(v) and 5(b) (vi)).
 - Ensure that the proprietor makes sure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, promote the well-being of pupils and fulfil their responsibilities effectively

so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34, 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders, including the proprietors, have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They have not secured good-quality teaching to enable pupils to make the progress of which they are capable in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects.
- Although leaders have some understanding of what needs to improve in the school, they do not systematically check all aspects of the school's effectiveness and use the information to plan actions to address weaknesses in a timely fashion. This limits leaders' abilities to drive forward improvements at a good pace.
- In line with the school's ethos, pupils spend the majority of their time in school learning Kodesh. Afternoon sessions are mainly devoted to the learning of English and mathematics. This helps most pupils to make good progress in these subjects. In addition, teachers use a commercial scheme to teach some science and geography each week.
- Occasionally, pupils have opportunities for arts and crafts, woodwork, singing and drama, usually linked to the Jewish festivals. Pupils also engage in some physical exercise each week. There is no systematic teaching or assessment in these subjects. This means that pupils are unable to make sufficient progress in these subjects or develop a broad range of relevant skills. This means that the secular curriculum (Chol) is too narrow to prepare pupils adequately for key stage 2.
- Leaders say they teach pupils to respect all people. However, they do not make sure that pupils learn enough about the diversity of faiths and cultures found in the United Kingdom as these are taught in a very cursory manner. Further, leaders do not ensure that pupils learn sufficiently about the need to tolerate and respect those groups of people who are protected by law, as defined in the 2010 Equality Act. This limits pupils' preparedness for their future lives in modern Britain.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding of some aspects of life in modern Britain, such as the monarchy and democracy. They wrote letters to the Queen on her birthday, for instance, and they learned how laws can affect them, such as the prohibition of riding bicycles on the pavement.
- When leaders established the school, a priority was for pupils to learn English to a good standard, as most pupils speak Yiddish at home. They also wanted to make sure that pupils reach age-related expectations in mathematics. The Chol headteacher has been the driving force in planning the teaching and learning in these subjects. She has arranged training for the teachers and she regularly observes their lessons and gives them feedback to promote improvement. At the start of this year, she initiated appraisal systems to hold teachers to account. As a result, teachers are developing their skills and helping most pupils to achieve well in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have introduced systems for checking pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science, but not in other subjects. Leaders use the information to identify any slowing of pupils' progress in these subjects. Leaders set specific targets for improvement for any pupil who is identified as underachieving. The inclusion leader and

support staff tailor their support to help these pupils meet their targets and catch up.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school.

Governance

- The two trustees are the proprietors of the school. There is no additional governing body.
- The proprietors have not been diligent in checking that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- The proprietors have a clear vision for the school that is shared by school leaders, members of staff and parents. They say that they strive to give pupils a full religious and general education. They want pupils to succeed academically and socially and to equip them with the tools to lead constructive and fulfilling lives in the future. The proprietors are beginning to realise that the current Chol curriculum does not adequately deliver their goals.
- The proprietors visit the school often and are in constant contact with school leaders and parents. As a result, they are aware of the quality of teaching and keep a close eye on pupils' progress in their Kodesh, English and mathematics studies.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school site is very secure, with full-time security guards protecting the premises.
- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and takes into account the latest statutory guidance. The school does not have a website. The policy is available to parents on request.
- Both headteachers have attended enhanced safeguarding training for designated safeguarding leaders. They, in turn, provide training for all other members of staff. Training has included the 'Prevent' duty and leaders have undertaken training in safer recruitment.
- There is a good culture of vigilance. Members of staff are aware that pupils could be subject to abuse in different forms and they look out for any signs that may indicate a concern. They know what to do and who they should report to.
- Leaders work closely with parents and external agencies to support pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Through the curriculum, pupils learn safe practices. They told the inspector for instance, about 'stranger danger'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, as leaders are unable to demonstrate the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement in a number of subjects.
- Teaching is not effective enough in subjects that should promote pupils' experiences in technological, physical and aesthetic and creative education. This is because there is no systematic planning of teaching in these areas, or of personal, social, health and

economic education.

- Teachers follow a systematic commercial plan for teaching science and geography, but they only assess pupils' work in science.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to identify the most able pupils or give them work that is more difficult. Sometimes teachers ask superficial questions that do not challenge pupils, especially the most able, to think deeply. This means that the most able pupils do not consistently reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers plan well in reading, writing and mathematics. This enables them to build on pupils' prior learning and helps them make steady progress in gaining new knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Typically, where teaching is good in mathematics, English and Kodesh, teachers display enthusiasm for learning, which inspires pupils. Teachers use resources that interest pupils and which help them to learn successfully. Teachers explain new concepts well and demonstrate what they expect from pupils.
- Teachers test pupils often in English and mathematics and use the assessment information to help them identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders use this information to make sure that additional adults provide support for pupils who need to catch up. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also well supported so that they make good progress.
- Pupils quickly develop early reading skills because teachers are well versed in the teaching of phonics. Teachers encourage and support pupils to read at home as well as at school. Pupils learn to make inferences and predictions from the text. As a result, they make good progress in their reading and comprehension skills.
- Pupils extend their vocabulary and learn to spell correctly as a result of regular practice and strong teaching.
- Some Kodesh teaching helps pupils to make good connections between religious teachings and their everyday life. For example, the inspector observed a lesson on the biblical teaching 'to look after one's body exceedingly well'. The teacher and pupils related this to the importance of regular exercise to promote good health and taking sensible precautions to stay safe.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are met. For example, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of faiths, cultures and lifestyles found in modern Britain is limited.
- Pupils are self-confident and very curious. During the inspection, a number of pupils approached the inspector and asked him a variety of questions. They were very keen to tell the inspector about a recent boat trip on the Thames, their sighting of Big Ben and

their enjoyment from visiting an animal farm. Pupils display similar interest and curiosity during lessons.

- Pupils feel safe and secure in the school because they know that adults will always help them. Bullying is very rare. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe and are currently rehearsing a presentation they will be making for their parents on road safety.
- Leaders work with a range of agencies and therapists to help support pupils with their mental and physical well-being. These include art therapy and occupational therapy sessions, for example.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They are inquisitive and feel confident to ask questions and to express their opinions. Occasionally, when teaching is not challenging enough, there is some low-level disruption. The teachers deal with this effectively and learning proceeds.
- Pupils move around the school sensibly. They play very well together, collaborating in making creative structures from toy bricks, for instance, or sharing other equipment in the small playground. They also get on well with the adults in the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. A number of parents confirmed this. Typical of the parents' views was, 'my child cannot wait to go to school each day and he enjoys every minute'. Attendance rates are above those found in primary schools nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Only a few of the most able pupils reach high standards because teachers do not consistently give them work which is challenging enough.
- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points at the end of Reception. Almost all of the current Year 2 pupils are reaching the standard expected for their age.
- Because of the well-targeted support, the few pupils who join the school mid-term with little experience of English make good progress, which enables them to catch up with the other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities and any who fall behind make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because they receive effective help.
- Pupils make good progress overall in their Kodesh subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	142572
DfE registration number	204/6012
Inspection number	10026300

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Jewish orthodox boys school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Proprietor	Talmud Torah London Ltd
Chair	Alexander Halpert
Headteacher (Kodesh)	Chaim Schachter
Headteacher (Chol)	Rachel Gluck
Annual fees (day pupils)	Variable depending on the ability of parents and carers to pay
Telephone number	020 3322 7879
Website	No website
Email address	talmudtorahlondon@gmail.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Talmud Torah London opened in September 2015 and was not registered.
- In February 2016, the school was granted registration for 20 boys aged from five to seven years. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school caters for the Orthodox Chassidic community of Hackney in north London. It is located in a synagogue and shares the premises with a separately registered early years provision.
- Pupils learn in Yiddish in the morning (Kodesh curriculum) and in English in the afternoon (Chol, or secular, curriculum).

- A very small number of pupils currently on roll have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school also educates a small minority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- There are two headteachers, one for Jewish studies (Kodesh) and one for secular subjects (Chol).
- The school aims to 'encourage the enthusiasm and joy of learning through a creative curriculum and a holistic approach to education which reflects Orthodox Jewish values'.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Learning was observed in six parts of lessons; all of these were joint observations with one of the headteachers.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. The school's information about pupils' progress was also checked.
- The inspector spoke to the headteachers and teachers. A meeting was held with the two proprietors. There was also a formal discussion with a group of pupils and various informal discussions with pupils during break times and in lessons.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, and the views of the two parents who requested to meet him.
- Documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work were checked for compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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